

**NHS****Sutton and Merton**

## Med-E-Mail

Minor Ailments Service – Available at your Community Pharmacist

### If it's minor...

A new service is available for patients who need to see a health professional, but their signs or symptoms are not severe enough to mean that they need to see their local doctor (GP).

It's called the Minor Ailments Service, and from 1 August 2009 it has been rolled out in Community Pharmacies across the NHS Sutton and Merton area.

It means that a patient can simply walk into a pharmacy and receive a private and confidential consultation and where appropriate, a medicine to treat their minor ailment. The cost of the consultation will be met by NHS Sutton and Merton and if the patient is exempt, there will be no charge for the cost of the medicine.

- Sore Throat • Constipation • Headache • Earache • Temperature •
- Hay Fever • Indigestion or Heart Burn • Tummy Upset • Diarrhoea •
- Thrush • Haemorrhoids • Nappy Rash • Threadworm • Athlete's foot •
- Insect Bites and Stings • Mouth ulcers • Acute Bacterial Conjunctivitis •

This is great news for patients, as it improves access and removes financial barriers to accessing medical treatment. But it is also good news for GPs, especially at the winter season sets in, as it will free up their time and allow them to concentrate on more serious medical conditions.

We would like to ask GP receptionists, the traditional “gate keepers” to promote this service, and to make patients aware that they don't always have to make an appointment with the GP if they have something minor.

The pharmacists who participate in the service have clearly defined “trigger points” –signs and symptoms that will trigger an instant GP referral –patient safety is a key consideration in this service.